

REMARKS

The restriction requirement of March 11, 2004, supercedes the previous restriction requirement. Accordingly, no claims are withdrawn and claims 1-26 are pending. Reconsideration of the restriction requirement in view of these remarks is respectfully requested.

Restriction Requirement

In reply to the March 11, 2004, Restriction Requirement, Applicants provisionally elect Species I, First Embodiment and claims 1-12 and 14-17 that read on the First Embodiment.

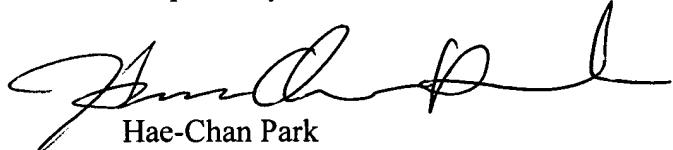
It is also respectfully submitted that the subject matter of all claims is sufficiently related that a thorough search for the subject matter of any one Species of claims would encompass a search for the subject matter of the remaining claims. Thus, it is respectfully submitted that the search and examination of the entire application could be made without serious burden. *See* MPEP § 803 in which it is stated that “if the search and examination of an entire application can be made without serious burden, the examiner must examine it on the merits, even though it includes claims to independent or distinct inventions.” It is respectfully submitted that this policy should apply in the present application in order to avoid unnecessary delay and expense to Applicants and duplicative examination by the Patent Office.

Thus, withdrawal of the Restriction Requirement is respectfully requested.

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Application No.: 09/862,588

It is not believed that any extensions of time or fees are required. However, if an extension of time is necessary to prevent abandonment of this application, then such extensions of time are hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136, and any fees required therefore are hereby authorized to be charged to our Deposit Account No. 23-1951.

Respectfully submitted,



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